

SUPERIOR COURT

A Reference Guide
to Court Resources,
Programs and Services
For Orange County Residents

“Serve the public by administering justice and resolving disputes under the law, thereby protecting the rights and liberties guaranteed by the constitutions of California and of the United States.”

Mission statement for the Superior Court of California, County of Orange

2001

SUPERIOR COURT WEBSITE

Visit the Court's website at:
<http://courts.oc.ca.gov>

Website contains information on:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- Civil Grand Jury
- Community Outreach Programs
- Court Forms
- Court Locations and Phone Numbers
- Court Employment Recruitment
- Directory of Judges
- Family Law
- Fee Schedules
- Juror Information
- Law and Motion Tentative Rulings
- Probate
- Rules of Court
- Small Claims
- Traffic
- Plus Links to County Legal Services Organizations:
 - California State Bar Certified Lawyer Referral Service
 - Legal Aid Society of Orange County
 - Orange County Bar Association
 - Orange County Bar Foundation
 - Orange County District Attorney
 - Orange County Public Defender

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the Municipal Courts throughout California unified with and became part of the Superior Courts in their respective counties, as a result of a constitutional amendment which appeared on the ballot and was passed by the voters in June of that year.

The unification of the courts has underscored the importance of informing the community about the work of the court and the programs and services offered through the court in collaboration with other governmental agencies or community service programs.

The judicial officers and staff of the Orange County Superior Court hope that members of the community will be able to learn more about the role that the justice system and the court have in the community through an understanding of the court's programs and services, and will take advantage of resources available through the court at its various justice centers. The judges and staff also hope that by sharing information about these resources, the community will respond with suggestions that will assist the court in its planning efforts.

For further information, inquiries, or to offer suggestions that will assist the court in its work, please feel free to call or write the court's Community and Media Relations Office: 714-834-7623; 700 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

You may also send e-mail to the court at its Internet address: webmaster@superior.co.orange.ca.us

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COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Access to Courts for Persons with Disabilities

The court provides interpreters for American Sign Language as well as assistive hearing devices, and has established several T.D.D. lines to enable persons with hearing disabilities to communicate with court staff by telephone. For information about assistive hearing devices, please contact the Court Reporter and Interpreter Services Office at 714-834-5323 .

Alternate Defense Program

The court may appoint private attorneys to provide legal counsel to indigent defendants when the public defender has declared a conflict of interest.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Early settlement of disputes can save parties money and eliminate the stress and uncertainty of a trial. Litigants at any of the Orange County Trial Courts may agree to participate in an arbitration or mediation, and the courts maintain a list of over 300 qualified attorneys who have volunteered to serve as arbitrators for a minimal fee. The list of available arbitrators is located in the Civil Operations Office at each of the trial courts.

Children's Chambers

This program permits parents and guardians to leave young children in a safe and entertaining area during the time when the adult caretaker is conducting business at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange, where family law, juvenile and probate cases are heard, as well as at the North Justice Center in Fullerton and, in February 2001, at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana.

COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

These individuals are volunteers, responsible to the Court, who act as advocates for children in the Dependency Court system. Their purpose is to help resolve cases in the best interests of the children involved, in the shortest amount of time possible. The advocates study the case record, question the children about their needs and wishes, and interview family members, social workers, therapists, teachers, and anyone else involved with the case. CASA volunteers make recommendations in reports to the judges, and provide children with support and reassurance about the court process. CASA volunteer involvement shortens court time, helps reunite children with parents or find safe, stable homes more quickly, and connects children with the community resources they need to rebuild their disrupted lives.

Court Assistants Reaching Out with Empathy (CARE)

Retired volunteers assist the court's Mediation and Investigative Services staff in ensuring that individuals placed under court conservatorship are being cared for in their best interests. These assistants research case files, make field visits, and report their findings. This enables the judge to identify conservatees who may be at risk of abuse or negligence sooner than would be possible in the normal scheduling of court reviews. The volunteers are invited to participate through a letter from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to its membership in Orange County. For further information, please call 714-935-6550 .

Court Internet Web Pages

The Orange County Superior Court maintains a Web page with links to all justice center locations throughout the county. The Web site contains a wealth of information about all aspects of court operations, including types of cases heard, cities within the court's jurisdiction, hours of operation, profiles of judicial officers, local rules of court, telephone directories, fee schedules, forms lists and printable court forms, and services available through the court, as well as links to other courts and government agencies. The court's Web address is: <http://courts.oc.ca.gov>

COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Detention Release Program

This program provides pretrial release services for persons charged with felonies. Detention release officers ensure that the bail information is available at the time of arraignment and may make recommendations to the judges as to whether a person should be released on his or her own recognizance. Detention release officers also handle on-call magistrate requests and domestic violence matters.

Drug Court Programs

Orange County Superior Court currently operates Drug Court programs at every justice center. These special court calendars deal solely with defendants who have been charged with crimes related to the abuse of controlled substances and who meet certain requirements. To be eligible for Drug Court, defendants must agree to accept responsibility for their actions, participate in a regimented program designed to help them overcome their drug use, and work to become productive citizens. The collaborative program is a combined effort of Community Service Programs (CSP), the Superior Court, and other agencies throughout the county, along with the Santa Ana Work Center and several cities.

Family Court Mediation Program

Superior Court mediation staff meet with parents to discuss issues concerning their children, and facilitate setting up a written plan that addresses the parental rights and responsibilities of the parties, and how they may share physical care of their children.

Family Law Facilitator Program

Court staff assist unrepresented litigants in getting through court procedures in family law matters involving dissolution of marriage, restraining orders, child custody and support, visitation scheduling, spousal support and paternity matters. Litigants are provided assistance in completing court forms and help in learning to use the computer program to calculate child support, and are invited to attend workshops on these and other issues which are held each Monday morning between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange. Additional information is available at <http://courts.oc.ca.gov/family/flfacil.asp>

COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Juror Appreciation Week

All Orange County Superior Court justice centers participate in this program, which was established in 1996. The first official Juror Appreciation Week was celebrated in May 1996, as a demonstration of how much the court values the county residents who give their time and effort to serve as trial jurors.

Jury Service Exit Survey

Jury service may be difficult, demanding and sometimes inconvenient. In view of the importance of jury service, a questionnaire survey is offered in order that jurors may respond to questions about their experience while serving on jury duty. This survey helps the court understand jurors' experience and find ways to improve the system.

Juvenile Justice Commission

The Juvenile Justice Commission is comprised of thirteen community members appointed by the presiding judge of the Superior Court. The Commission conducts announced and unannounced inspections of every police department, juvenile housing facility and Juvenile Court school, and issues reports to the presiding judge of the Juvenile Court. The Commission studies a broad range of topics pertaining to Juvenile Court law and county operations and files formal reports.

Peer Court

This is a program in which teenagers accused of certain types of crimes are judged by a jury of their peers after a trial before one of the judicial officers of the Superior Court. The trials may be conducted at one of several local high schools. Student peers also recommend the length and nature of the activity that the teen must perform to make amends for the offense, if he or she has been found guilty. For further information, contact the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Orange County at 949-440-6757 or check its Web site at www.crfoc.com

COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Public Assistant Liaisons

Volunteers at the Central Justice Center provide information to members of the public who use the courthouse. The volunteers work jointly with staff in the traffic, public offenses, small claims and limited jurisdiction civil offices to make the court a user-friendly environment and to improve public access to court facilities.

Public Service Probate Kiosk

At this kiosk, located in the Lamoreaux Justice Center Probate Office, anyone can call up a probate case and view complete documents in an on-line environment. The user may also select and order documents for printing on-line, pay for the copies at the public counter, and go on his or her way without ever having to wait for a court file to be manually pulled from the shelves.

Speakers Bureau

Judicial Officers and court staff volunteer to make presentations at meetings and address topics related to the administration of justice. This program offers opportunities for judges to talk about issues of mutual concern to the court and the community. Through the Speakers Bureau program, judges and court staff become more accessible to the community and can increase public awareness about the contributions and needs of the justice system. Subject areas may be topics dealing with the court system in general, or specific issues about trial court operations. For further information, contact the Director of Community Relations at 714-834-7623 . Other programs offered by the Speakers Bureau:

Career Day Program - Judicial Officers and court staff volunteer to appear as speakers during the Career Day Programs offered at local high schools and colleges.

On-Site Seminar Program - Court staff volunteer to speak on site, mostly to law firms, on topics such as civil case management, procedural changes, new fees and new forms. Information packets are prepared and forwarded to the requesting party for copywork and distribution prior to the seminar. Seminars may be conducted during the lunch hour, after regular work hours, and on Saturdays.

COURT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Brown Bag Seminars - Seminars are presented during the lunch hour in one of the courtrooms at the Central Justice Center or the Lamoreaux Justice Center. Topics may include case management, law and motion, document filing procedures, and new court programs. While these seminars are primarily directed toward the needs of the legal community, anyone is welcome. Information packets are prepared and distributed during the event.

South Justice Center Domestic Violence TRO Program

This program enables victims of domestic violence in the South Orange County area to obtain an ex-parte temporary restraining order (TRO) at their local courthouse. These orders are issued on a permanent and regular basis to victims referred to the court through a local women's shelter, and the program provides a more efficient and effective level of service to domestic violence victims.

Take Our Children to Work Day

On these special days, court employees bring the children in their lives, whether their own, relatives, or family friends, to their workplaces to witness first hand the work and activities that occur during each day at the court. All children visiting the court on these occasions are looked after by a personal guide.

Tattoo Removal Program

This program was developed to assist members of the community who are defendants in criminal proceedings and who are interested in voluntary removal of tattoos associated with gang membership, in order to assert their personal independence and be successful in obtaining employment. For further information, contact the Orange County Probation Department at 714-569-2000 , and ask for the Tattoo Removal Program.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Aftercare Program for Drug Court Participants

Community Service Programs (CSP) offers an Aftercare program for drug court participants who are in the third phase recovery, in order to support their ongoing efforts to maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Networking and job training referrals aid in the development of practical self-help skills which relate to problems of daily living.

Domestic Violence Education Training

This program is open to mental health professionals, judicial officers, attorneys, client advocates and other interested professionals. The faculty for the curriculum includes judicial officers and other experienced professionals who are knowledgeable about issues and dynamics of domestic violence and family law procedures. The training includes a variety of perspectives - from the court, shelter services, batterer treatment programs, academic work and clinical practice - and is offered on a scheduled basis.

Drug Court Speakers Bureau

The speakers bureau, which functions under the auspices of the Community Services Program, contains a roster of Drug Court graduates who volunteer to appear at schools for the purpose of educating students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The graduates have a powerful message to communicate, based on their own personal experience. Speakers are available to talk to students in middle schools and high schools. For further information, call 949-851-3168 .

Emergency Protective Orders

A judicial hearing officer will be on duty 365 days a year, 24 hours a day to consider telephone requests for immediate domestic violence restraining orders from Orange County law enforcement officers at the scene of a dispute. Issuance of these emergency orders while law enforcement officers are present to deal with a volatile situation has proven to be very effective in quickly defusing the conflict and protecting all parties from the potential for additional violence.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Family Law Information Center

The center, which is located in the 7th floor lobby of the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange, contains the Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN), which is an Internet- and kiosk-based service system which allows low-income parties to obtain family law and community resource information, print out legal forms and receive attorney referrals. The kiosk consists of a computer keypad and a large touch screen that displays both printed and interactive instructions in Spanish and English, and it is equipped with a telephone handset. A camera mounted in the kiosk allows telephone operators to see and assist the user, and a credit-card reader for paying court fees and scanner for entering documents are also available.

Family Violence Council

The goal of the council is to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence in Orange County. The council is comprised of members from the judiciary, county agencies, the legal community, law enforcement and interested members from the community at large. Through the work of the Orange County Family Violence Council and support staff, a Domestic Violence Registry database was developed and is available to law enforcement and the courts 24 hours a day. The council has also been involved in numerous other projects, including elder abuse training to law enforcement, and programs on domestic and teen dating violence presented to local high school and college students. Additional information is available at <http://courts.oc.ca.gov>

Fire Department Clothing Drive

Court staff participate with Orange County Fire Department personnel in the annual clothing drive which produces articles needed by members of the community during the late fall and winter seasons.

Internship Programs

The Superior Court has several types of Internship Programs available: Law Clerk Internship, Administrative Management Intern Program and Operations Management Intern Program. Some are formal programs where credit toward a college or law degree may be earned, while others are designed to provide direct operational experience in one or more of the court's jurisdictional areas, such as Jury Services.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Lawyers' Auxiliary Courthouse Tours

Volunteers from the Orange County Bar Association Lawyers' Auxiliary coordinate with court staff in conducting tours of the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana for 8th grade and high school senior civics students. Class instructors are welcome to call 714-834-5277 to arrange for tours which include an orientation about courtroom proceedings.

Mock Trial Program

Under the auspices of the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Orange County, judicial officers and members of the local bar volunteer to serve as mock court trial judges and mentors to teams of high school students who prepare their cases for trial. Through this experience, high school students learn basic concepts about the law and the practice of legal procedures in a courtroom setting. For additional information, call 949-440-6757 or check the Web at www.crfoc.com.

Operation Santa Claus

Court staff volunteer personal time in support of the Orange County Sheriff's program and provide useful gifts for children and seniors during the holiday season.

Red Cross Semi-Annual Blood Drive

Court personnel participate each January and July in this county-sponsored event.

Santa Ana Summer Youth Employment and Training Program

High school students learn the responsibilities of holding a job while they work part-time in various areas of the courts, performing some of the tasks they would as employees of the court. Job duties include typing, copywork, file and document searches, notice processing and data entry. The students are given various assignments to help them gain experience in office and courtroom settings. Students are paid through a grant to the Private Industry Council for the City of Santa Ana. For further information, call 714-565-2600.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Santa Ana Unified School District's Stay-In-School Program

Judicial Officers and court staff participate as speakers in this program, the goal of which is to impress upon middle and high school students the life-long benefits of completing the basic education program offered through grade 12, and to persuade the students to consider educational opportunities available to them after graduation from high school.

School Year ROP Program

This program is designed to offer students the opportunity to learn how to work in an business environment using office machines and computer software programs for word-processing and spreadsheet applications. The Central Justice Center in Santa Ana has been participating in the program for several years, and there may be a future opportunity to expand the court's involvement at other justice center locations throughout the county. Students may work for class credit at a location close to their school, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Shortstop / Programa Shortstop

Judicial officers and court staff work with volunteers from the Orange County Bar Foundation to involve juvenile offenders in a program which helps them recognize the serious consequences of committing crimes. This program, established in 1980, steps in after a youth's first run-in with the law and offers a rigorous course for offenders aged 10 to 17 and their parents. A Spanish language version, Programa Shortstop, was added in 1989. Thousands of young people and their families have gone through the program. For more information, visit the Orange County Bar Foundation Web site at www.ocbarfoundation.org and click on the Programs button.

Small Claims Advisor Program

This program provides free assistance to anyone who is suing or being sued in Orange County Small Claims Court. The Legal Aid Society of Orange County provides advisors, who are available to explain the rules and procedures of the Small Claims Court. The advisor can provide you with sample forms and instructions on how to prepare your case. To reach the advisor, call 800-963-7717 . For more information, visit the program Web site at www.legal-aid.com/smlclms

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

United Way Campaign

Court employees participate in annual fund-raising events and activities sponsored by the county as a means of contributing to community services through the United Way Campaign.

Victim / Witness Assistance Program

Victims of crime, their family members and witnesses of crime may receive crisis and follow-up counseling, information, referrals and extended support services through this program, which has offices at each of the justice centers throughout the county. Community Services Programs (CSP) established the program in 1978 and it operates as part of the Superior Court administration. The goal of the program is to alleviate the trauma and devastating effects of crime on the lives of victims and witnesses and to lessen their fear or concern about participation in the criminal justice system. The program encourages the reporting of crime and the victims' cooperation with the investigation and prosecution of the case. Victim / Witness Program offices and information numbers:

Central Justice Center	714-834-4350
Harbor Justice Center	949-476-4855
Lamoreaux Justice Center	714-935-7074
North Justice Center	714-773-4575
South Justice Center	949-249-5037
West Justice Center	714-896-7188

Victim and Witness Assistance Programs include the following:

Child Dependency Services. On referral from County counsel and the Social Services Agency, court staff assist and support children preparing to testify in dependency cases in the Juvenile Court, and ensure the safety and comfort of these children.

Court Restitution Services. Restitution specialists are charged with the responsibility of establishing financial loss and collecting court-ordered restitution payments from convicted offenders.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Domestic Violence Assistance Program. The Family Law Court requested the assistance of the Community Services Program to provide temporary restraining order (TRO) assistance and support to victims of domestic violence. Program staff and volunteer attorneys are available at Lamoreaux Justice Center to assist victims with legal issues. Program locations and information numbers:

Lamoreaux Justice Center	714-935-7956
TRO Information Line	714-973-0134

Family Violence Victim Services. This unit was established in 1994 as part of the Investigation Unit of the Orange County Sheriff Department. Counselors provide outreach and support services to victims at the request of an investigator or prosecutor. In 1995, the program expanded to the Orange County District Attorney Family Violence Unit, where counselors work with victims in all felony cases. In 1997, an elder abuse specialist was added to the program to meet the special needs of senior citizens who are victims of domestic violence. In 1998, the program further expanded to the police departments of Santa Ana and Huntington Beach.

Gang Victims Services. Since 1990, this program has been responding 24 hours a day to provide crisis intervention and assistance to victims of gang-related violence and their families. Accompanied by the investigating officer, program counselors give death notification to family members of homicide victims. Referrals are received from the Santa Ana, Anaheim and Westminster Police Departments, the Orange County Sheriff, the District Attorney's Office and the Probation Department. Staff assess the victim's safety, medical status and emergency needs, and provide continuing counseling services. Working with the District Attorney's Gang Unit, staff also provide support to victims and witnesses during the investigation and prosecution of the case. Support groups are available for parents and siblings of young people killed by gang violence.

COURT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Homicide Victim Services . Since 1993, working with the Homicide Unit in the District Attorney's Office, program counselors provide therapy and support services to family members of homicide victims during the investigation and prosecution of the case.

Sexual Assault Victim Services / Prevention Program. This program became a component of the Community Services Program in 1981, and has since assisted victims of rape and child sexual abuse, in addition to providing extended support services to victims' family members. Rape Crisis Centers are located in Santa Ana and Irvine. Certified Sexual Assault Counselors, working with law enforcement and the criminal justice system, respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to three crisis counseling hotlines, as well as hospitals and police departments on request. Program locations and information / assistance numbers are:

North Orange County	714-834-4317
South Orange County	949-752-1971
Prevention Education	949-752-1971
Rape Crisis Hotlines	714-957-2737
	949-831-9110

Witness Services . This program is under contract to the District Attorney's Office and involves placing subpoenaed witnesses on on-call or stand-by notice, orientation to the criminal justice system, case status and disposition information, employer intervention, and transportation and parking assistance.

COURT PUBLICATIONS

Court Rules. The Orange County Superior Court makes its copies rules available for purchase at all justice centers and any or all of the rules may be downloaded at no charge from the court's Web site at <http://courts.oc.ca.gov>

Document Image Processing. A report about the Orange County Superior Court's award-winning Document Imaging Project in the Probate Court.

Family Law Facilitator Assistance Brochure. For further information, contact court staff at 714-935-8304.

Judges Speakers Bureau. An information pamphlet about the availability of judges who volunteer to speak to the community about the court system. Pamphlets may be downloaded from <http://courts.oc.ca.gov>, or obtained in person from the court's executive offices on the 2nd floor of the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana.

Judicial Profiles. Profiles containing information about the professional background of the court's judicial officers are available at <http://courts.oc.ca.gov> or at the court's executive offices on the 2nd floor of the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana.

Volunteer Care Program. For further information, please contact court staff at 714-935-6550.

Welcome to Your Court. Central Justice Center's booklet offers general information about civil, small claims, public offense and traffic proceedings. For further information, contact court staff at 714-834-7623.